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BALROG



-----BALROG-----

This, good people (and the rest of you, too) is BALROG, a \*fanzine\* edited and published by Chicago's only practicing fanzine publisher, a chap otherwise known as "Ben Solon"; a sensitive fan with a dull, brutish face. This "Ben Solon" lives (really!) in an Apartment Building located at 3933 N. Janssen in the afofe mentioned Chicago. That's the Chicago which is located on the southwestern edge of Lake Michigan in a State called Illinois or sometimes just Ill.

Anyway, this issue of BALROG is number 2 and it's dated September 1966. It's dated September 1966 because this happens to be September 1966 (or at least that's what the calendar says, and who am I to argue with it?) Furthermore, BALROG 2 will be sent through N'APA; after all, it's intended for the 30th Mailing of that August Organization. I mean, it would look kind of \*silly\* to send 40-odd copies of BALROG to Wrai Ballard for inclusion in the next SAPS mailing--after all, I'm not even a member of SAPS yet; I'm only number 19 on the Waiting List. And, it would be even sillier to distribute BALROG to General Fandom; it's far too sercon. And all this, in case you hadn't noticed (or even if you had) makes for an honest-to-Rich Mann 23 line colophon, the kind you can't hardly get no more! It's also a Chaotic Publication; and you can get them kind.

In case anyone is interested, I'm using Bohn (that's Rex Rotary in Clever Plastic Disguise) L 180 stencils and my mimeo is a \*Gestetner\* 105.

It certainly is a wonderful thing.

Yes.

-----FORETHOTS-----

Like most Big City dwellers, I find it more convenient to take public transportation to and from work; it's slower than driving, but it's easier on the nerves. My suburban dwelling friends sneer at this and tell me there is nothing like the commuter train--that splendid, double-decked tinted-windowed, air-conditioned, fluorescent-lighted, mile-a-minute marvel.

But for fast dependable intra-city transportation, I'll take a CTA but every time.

Yes.

The bus I ride to work originates at Chicago's northern boundry and rattles, crawls, lurches and spurts over a ten mile route. It's slow. It's bumpy. It's dominated by the elements: a heavy rain can double the running time; snow can triple it.

And those are only the minor irritants.

What makes bus travel impossible is the standing-up problem--the when-to and when-not-to of it. This became apparent the very first morning I began traveling by Green Giant. It pulled up, I boarded and...women! Everywhere women. Young secretaries, older career girls, scrubbed and \*sigh\* sweated high-school girls, baboushka-bundled housewives headed for

State Street. Only three other males--including the driver.

There were a few empty seats, and I took one next to an attractive, graying teacher-type and began to read my newspaper. As we stopped along the way, more passengers boarded.

All women.

Soon they were standing in the aisle. I continued to read, but I began to feel female eyes looking, watching, staring... My concentration slipped away. Some of the standees glowered; some frowned. One wore a sweet, martyr like look; I could almost read her thoughts: Poor fellow, probably has back trouble. And so young, too.

I tried feigning sleep, but with all the bouncing and jolting I couldn't have deceived a 3rd grade dropout. Even if I had managed to doze, I couldn't have slept long. A \*F\*A\*T\* woman in the aisle was systematically banging her hip against my shoulder. And no one was crowding her. I was almost angry, but I reminded myself that I was in the wrong; I really should have offered her my seat, and I knew it.

The trouble was she did too.

I sat and mulled it over. My hands began to sweat. I had never given up my seat before. What should I say? Whom should I offer it to? Not Hippy, I decided, but it was too late now; she had moved further back. Finally, in one ~~spasmodic~~ convulsive move, I bolted out of my seat and blurted to a pleasant-looking fortyish woman, "Here, take this seat."

I breathed deeply and was beginning to develop a healthy inner glow when a tiny sixtyish woman whom I hadn't noticed said to her companion: "I wish somebody would offer me a seat. I've got foot trouble, y' know." Her friend, about the same age and also standing nodded and looked at me very gravely.

Next day I decided not to sit down at all.

The bus arrived and there were 10 empty seats. I stood. A few more passengers boarded, then a few more. Still there were empties. I began to feel somewhat foolish. We continued south. I was getting as many looks --though mostly quizzical--as on the day before. I finally decided the bus ahead must be taking all the passengers. So I sat.

At the next stop half a dozen women piled aboard.

I got up again.

Then, for some unexplained--and unexplainable--reason, 15 people got off. Again there were seats. Again I sat. I began to feel like the resident clown. (There was some agreement on this point: a bobby-soxer started to giggle; a working girl snickered.)

Next day I boarded and sat. The bus filled up I stood and offered my seat to the oldest looking woman in the vicinity. "No. Thank you very

much," she said, "but I'm getting off at the next stop." I turned to another woman. Same offer. "No thank you," she said, icily. Was it because I hadn't asked her first?

That night I thought it all through and concluded that the only way to avoid trouble was to get up and walk away from my seat, saying nothing. So next morning that's exactly what I did. The woman nearest me smiled and started to sit down. Just then another woman came up from behind and beat her to it.

"That was very rude," said the wronged woman. "He got up to give me his seat. Didn't you?" She turned to me. Several others looked up at me, waiting.

"I..."

I pulled up my coat collar, got off the bust, and walked six blocks to work.

P.S.: I take the "L" now.

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#### BACKLASH

THE ALLIANCE AMATEUR (OElephant) N'APAian's I Have Met Dept.: Lessee... Lon Atkins, Wally Webber (well, I shook his hand...), Mike Ward, Fred Patten, Don Miller (for about five minutes at the Tricon...), Ed Meskys, Bruce Pelz, Hank Luttrell (at the '65 Midwestcon...remember?) Mark Irwin, Nate Bucklin, and--almost forgot--Len Bailes. Incidentally, the order in which these folk are listed has nothing to do with how well I like or dislike them; it's just the order in which their names occurred to me.

Is okay?

As for the proposed amendments...with the exception of the one that reads, "...and no more than half of a member's minimum page credits within a year may be composed of mailing comments as interpreted and tallied by the OE.", I don't really care if they pass or not. Apathy. Or something.

But getting back to the proposed restriction on mc's...I don't see any reason for it; a good mailing comment, as I pointed out last mlg, has as much original thought behind it as anything else you're likely to find in a fanzine.

HOOP (Lon Atkins) Of all people, I never expected kind, lovable (?) Lon Atkins to turn into a \*grouch\*. Oh well, live and learn and all that...  
the books

I agree with you about Trav McGee; they're about the best thriller series going, but, personally, I prefer MacDonald's non-series books. The McGee books are good, but they're a wee bit too stereotyped.

ORK (Johnny Chambers) Well, there go Lon Atkins' arguments for "crisp, clear, clean mimeo"... A lovely fanzine; you've got some of the finest ditto work I've yet seen--ORK is as well reproduced as Introspection and the dittoed Sata. And that, good sir, is High Praise. Yes.

VOMBIS (Roy Tackett) Roy Tackett a Girl Scout? Well, why not? Hell, I was (and still am) a Girl Scout. Yes. In fact I was the best damn Girl Scout in the neighborhood. Whenever a bunch of us guys would get a hankerin' for some Feminine Companionship they would send out someone to scout for girls. Inevitably the honor would fall to me. And I would go forth and scout for girls. The only trouble was...I never found any...

It is a proud and lonely thing to be a Girl Scout...

And that's "Backlash" for this round, gang; I enjoyed the mlg and all that but it didn't insprie much in the way of mc's. Sorry about that.

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ODDS AT ENDS

(Or how to fill a \*large\* Blank Space by really trying.)

If no one has any objections, I think I'll tell another tale of my bus riding adventures:

The CTA bus on lower Wacker Drive stopped near the Michigan Avenue intersection. The door opened and 10 or so people swarmed aboard. Unable to see the door clearly, the driver closed it on a man who had jumped aboard at the last moment.

"Hey! What the hell is the matter with you?" the man shouted at the driver. "Why don't you watch what you're doing for gawd's sweet sake? What the hell!"

The driver apologised and the big man turned and started toward the rear of the bus. The indignation still showed on his face when he accidentally elbowed a passanger and knocked in the crown of his hat.

--Ben Solon